

Message Text

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FOLLOWING IS TRANSMITTED FOR AMCONSUL BELFAST

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TAGS: UK (NI) PINT

SUBJ: NI EXECUTIVE-DESIGNATE AND ITS OPPONENTS ORGANIZE

SUMMARY: PROVISIONAL IRA NIGHT OF NOV 27-28 HIGHJACKED 90 VEHICLES TO BLOCK ROADS AND RAILROADS, WHILE LOYALISTS PREPARED FOR A RALLY, A CONFERENCE AND PERHAPS A PETITION, IN OPPOSITION TO FORMATION OF POWER-SHARING EXECUTIVE-DESIGNATE. NOMINATIONS TO ALL POSTS ON EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATION HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND PREPARATIONS ARE UNDERWAY FOR NEXT WEEK'S TRIPARTITE CONSULTATIONS IN ENGLAND. MODERATES IN NORTHERN IRELAND ARE BACKING THE EXECUTIVE, EXTREMISTS ON BOTH SIDES ARE OPPOSING IT. BUT THE VIEWS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE ON POWER-SHARING WERE NOT REALLY REFLECTED AT THE ASSEMBLY ELECTION IN JUNE, AND ARE NOT YET KNOWN. THE SDLP'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE NOV 30 - DEC 2 AND THE TURNOUT AT A LOYALIST RALLY SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 3 WILL PROVIDE EARLY INDICATIONS OF GRASS-ROOTS FEELING. END SUMMARY.

1. OPPONENTS OF THE FORMATION OF THE EXECUTIVE-DESIGNATE AND THE WORKING OF THE CONSTITUTION ACT ARE MOVING TO EXPRESS THEIR DISPLEASURES:

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A. THE PROVISIONAL IRA BLOCKED MANY ROADS AND RAILWAYS WITH 90 HIGHJACKED VEHICLES DURING THE NIGHT OF NOV 27-28. A PROVO COMMAND ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE RECENT ATTACK AGAINST RUC OFFICERS GUARDING SDLP HEAD-DESIGNATE OF DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AUSTIN CURRIE AND BRANDED CURRIE AND OTHER SDLP LEADERS AS "COLLABORATORS."

B. LOYALISTS BOYCOTTED THE NOVEMBER 21 MEETING AND DISRUPTED THAT OF NOV 28. THEY ARE REFUSING TO TALK TO NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY WHITELAW IN ADVANCE OF TRIPARTITE TALKS, AND INSIST ON INVITATIONS TO THE TALKS, WHICH THEY SAY HMG PROMISED IN THE WHITE PAPER. THEY ARE PLANNING A LARGE "SAVE ULSTER NOW" RALLY EVENING DECEMBER 3 AT ULSTER HALL, AND A CONFERENCE EVENING DEC 6. AT SAME VENUE AT WHICH SOME 600 DELEGATES FROM VARIOUS LOYALIST ORGANIZATIONS WILL ATTEMPT TO AGREE ON A COMMON POLICY TOWARD THE EXECUTIVE AND THE CONSTITUTION ACT. TALK OF A NEW PAN-LOYALIST POLITICAL PARTY SEEMS PREMATURE, BUT VANGUARD LEADER CRAIG SUGGESTED ON TELEVISION NOV 23 THAT WHAT IS SOUGHT IS AN "UMBRELLA" LOYALIST ORGANIZATION "LIKE THE ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL USED TO BE" (I.E. BEFORE IT APPROVED POWER-SHARING WITH THE SDLP). THERE IS ALSO TALK OF A PETITION TO HMG, LIKE THE ULSTER COVENANT OF 1912, IN WHICH ORDINARY CITIZENS WOULD EXPRESS THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE COUNCIL OF IRELAND. LOYALIST TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE UVF HAVE BEEN SILENT THUS FAR.

2. MEANWHILE, LEADERS OF THE THREE PARTIES REPRESENTED IN THE EXECUTIVE-DESIGNATE HAVE COMPLETED NOMINATION OF THEIR COLLEAGUES TO THE POSTS ALLOCATED TO THEM. UNIONIST LEADER FAULKNER AND SDLP LEADER FITT HAVE REPORTEDLY HAD SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS SINCE NOVEMBER 22, AND AN INFORMAL MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE- AND ADMINISTRATION- DESIGNATE REPORTEDLY IS TAKING PLACE NOV 29. THE SDLP WILL BE ABLE TO TEST PARTY GRASS-ROOTS SUPPORT FOR ITS POLICIES AT ITS ANNUAL CONFERENCE THIS WEEKEND IN BELFAST.

3. NORTHERN IRELAND'S MODERATES AND EXTREMISTS HAVE CLEARLY LINED UP FOR AND AGAINST THE EXECUTIVE-DESIGNATE, AND IT COMMANDS A LARGE MAJORITY IN THE ASSEMBLY. BUT NO ONE CAN BE SURE WHAT THE PEOPLE THINK. VANGUARD LEADER CRAIG RIGHTLY POINTS OUT THAT ONLY THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ALLIANCE WAS ELECTED ON A POWER-SHARING PLATFORM; THE SDLP SAID THEY WOULD MAKE THE ASSEMBLY A CONFERENCE-TABLE, WHILE THE OFFICIAL UNIONIST PROMISED NOT TO SHARE POWER WITH ANYONE WHOSE "PRIMARY AIM" IS THE UNITY OF IRELAND. CRAIG, PAISLEY AND OTHER LOYALISTS CONTEND THAT THE EXECUTIVE LACKS THE "WIDE ACCEPTABILITY" REQUIRED FOR THE NORTHERN CONSTITUTION ACT. ON THE OTHER HAND, POPULAR DISGUST WITH CONTINUING VIOLENCE, AND AMAZEMENT ABOUT THE MEASURE OF AGREEMENT ALREADY REACHED

AMONG UNIONISTS, SDLP, AND ALLIANCE, MAY WELL BE ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO HOPE THAT A SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED ON THE MANY CONTENTIOUS MATTERS REMAINING.

4. EARLY TESTS OF THE EXECUTIVE-DESIGNATE'S POPULARITY WILL BE SDLP CONFERENCE, AND THE TURNOUT AND ENTHUSIASM AT THE DEC 3 LOYALIST RALLY. PENBERTHY UNQUOTE SORENSON

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